

man of mighty faculties and little aims, whose life, with all its high performances, was vague and empty, because no high purpose had endowed it with reality."

Last of all, a poet whom bountiful Providence had granted to the earth, and who glorified the common dust of life, detected the long unseen resemblance between Ernest and the Stone Face, and by his fervor and his magic made the world also to see it.

Is the spiritual meaning of the allegory now clear and complete? God was not in the earthquake nor the mighty wind, but in the still small voice. It was not greed, or truculence or vainglory that reflected the features of the Great Stone Face, but Humility and Benevolence. Spiritual meaning.

THE INNER LIFE OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN.*

✠ ✠ BY NORMAN HAPGOOD. ✠ ✠



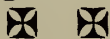
WITHOUT forgetting how inadequate is our knowledge of most of our fellow creatures, one may safely say that few characters on whom so much light has been turned retain so much mystery for the world at large as Abraham Lincoln. Personal experience has just taught me how difficult it is to represent, without being misunderstood, what I believe to be his true nature. Although I admire him fervently, and have for his attitude toward life an unlimited sympathy, the biography of him, which I recently published, fifty times as long as this article, packed full of anecdotes, and of emphasis of the personal side, was much too short to explain to others all that seemed real to me. How, then, can danger of misunderstanding be avoided in a summary article like this, where his personal idiosyncrasies, love affairs, and thousand picturesque remarks, must be omitted? Lincoln's moral nature will be misunderstood and wrongly valued by all who are hypnotized by the letter and forget the spirit, strain at gnats and swallow camels, and are habitually busy with the beams in their neighbor's eyes. The typical Pharisee, unable to praise the real Lincoln, has treated him after the manner of a funeral eulogy. The true Lincoln was not a prophet crying in the wilderness a message of which he had no doubt and which he alone had heard. He was a pilgrim whose progress to glory was marked by every vicissitude. Much of his life he stood and waited for light, doing in the meantime only the little things which his hand found to do. Even when he was chosen pilot, he did not pretend to know all the currents and rocks, or to foresee all the eddies of the storm. He waited for his inspiration from day to day, and believed that if he acted justly today tomorrow could be trusted to move toward righteousness.

Mysterious character.

Pilgrim, not prophet.

How bitterly he longed for light, how he even wept for it, when so many about him thought the great questions of right and wrong were easy! Political problems could not to his mind take the neat simplicity with which they were seen, for instance, from various points of view, by Wendell Phillips, by Stanton, by Cameron, by McClellan. His was the task of remembering that there was truth in every position, value in every method, even Cameron's, and of doing justice, as far as the ability was his, to all alike. In its best sense he constantly applied the rule, judge not. He was forced to give decisions, but he never did until they were inevitable, and he never judged in the sense of loftily passing moral

Sense of justice.



* This is the seventh CHAUTAUQUAN study of the Inner Life of Great Americans. "Stonewall" Jackson, by the Rev. Dr. J. Wm. Jones (one of General Jackson's chaplains during the Civil War), appeared in the October issue. John Greenleaf Whittier, by Mrs. James T. Fields, appeared in November. Phillips Brooks, by Pres. Charles F. Thwing, appeared in December. Mary Lyon, by Rev. Dr. A. E. Dunning, appeared in January. Dwight L. Moody, by Rev. Charles M. Stuart, D. D., appeared in February. Ulysses S. Grant, by Bishop John H. Vincent, appeared in March.

The greatest of virtues.

sentences on people whose beliefs seemed to him mistaken. One of his dominating and shining qualities was the greatest of the virtues. Charity, in every one of its beautiful meanings, pervaded him; not only in the moral sense of all-embracing love, but in the intellectual sense of comprehending sympathy was charity his guiding light. It was as much a part of his brain as of his heart, and as truly in thought as in feeling is it the greatest of the virtues. He had that humility which turns the world into a place of constant spiritual growth. His spirit was as teachable as that of a little child. A thousand lovable stories, for which no space can be taken here, show this strong and docile man, this superior and humble servant of the truth, listening with fairness to all the voices, large and small, that clamored about him; most suspicious of those which claimed infallibility, most sympathetic to those in which he could hear the tones of a simple and suffering heart.

Natural and regular growth.

The inner life of a man like this must grow. It is a mistake to think Lincoln was one man on the prairie and another in the White House, or that he became deeply good and serious at any one period; but the moral element in him did put forth new strength constantly and hold a more majestic place in his total character at sixty than it did at thirty. His development was natural and regular, and the last of life was the best because his nature was so truly sound. From the beginning he was kind, earnest, just, tender. There are stories that in his early years he helped, on one occasion, his little sister to tell the truth; on another carried the town drunkard out of the snow; at school, wrote essays against cruelty to animals. His was from the first a moral nature. He sought the moral meaning in everything. It was connected with this truth, perhaps, that he spoke so much in parables.

Creeds.

It was in his expressions of opinions about definite theological creeds that he altered most. In his youth he was interested in hostile criticism of generally accepted beliefs. During his presidency he referred constantly to God and Providence, although he never showed any tendency toward the discussion of religious problems. A few of his most famous words may be here given as an example of the tone which in his later life he took so often:

Tone of later life.

"Neither party expected for the war the magnitude or the duration which it has already attained. Neither anticipated that the cause of the conflict might cease with, or even before, the conflict should cease. Each looked for an easier triumph, and a result less fundamental and astounding. Both read the same Bible, and pray to the same God; and each invokes His aid against the other. It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God's assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces; but let us judge not, that we be not judged. The prayers of both could not be answered—that of neither has been answered fully.

"The Almighty has His own purposes. 'Woe unto the world because of offenses! for it must needs be that offenses come; but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh.' If we shall suppose that American slavery is one of those offenses which, in the providence of God, must needs come, but which, having continued through His appointed time, He now wills to remove, and that He gives to both north and south this terrible war, as the woe due to those by whom the offense came, shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a living God always ascribe to Him? Fondly do we hope—fervently do we pray—that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until 'all the wealth piled by the bondsman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, 'The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.'

"With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan—to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves, and with all nations."

Gentleness.

Another change, brought by the years, was an ever softer charity. From the beginning he was broad and just, but he was sometimes severe, and later, when the temptations to severity were so much greater, his tone became still gentler. When it was a question of allowing his fellow

creatures to die for their military sins, his tenderness became almost a fault, and his generals constantly complained that his frequent pardons injured discipline. The war and its slaughter were unspeakably terrible to him. He suffered for the soldiers, the mothers, the sisters, as few men suffer for others. Tears streamed down his face when he heard some awful piece of news.

A love of humor went together with an addiction to the most melancholy thoughts; and it is a well-known fact that famous humorists are often of the saddest temperaments. Feeling for the gloomier mysteries of life was very strong in Lincoln. Most of us know at least one stanza of his favorite poem:

Humor and
melancholy.

“ Oh! why should the spirit of mortal be proud?
Like a swift-fleeting meteor, a fast-flying cloud,
A flash of the lightning, a break of the wave,
He passeth from life to his rest in the grave.”

Most people who knew him well felt that this melancholy was always strong in him, but it varied from hour to hour, and month to month. After the death, in his early manhood, of the only woman he ever deeply loved, it drove him almost to insanity and suicide. During his presidency it was naturally darkest in the days when the union cause was at its worst. Its principal cause, however, was never agreed upon by his friends. One of the reasons why his inner feelings and thoughts remain such a mystery is that he had so little genuinely intimate companionship in his life. It has been said, with substantial truth, that his only real confidant during the whole of his existence was Joshua Speed, and it is in his letters to him that we get more inner personal flashes than in any other documents bearing on his nature. In 1842 he wrote to Speed:

Personal flashes.

“ I shall be very lonesome without you. How miserably things seem to be arranged in this world! If we have no friends we have no pleasure, and if we have them we are sure to lose them, and be doubly pained by the loss.”

And in the same year:

“ I always was superstitious; I believe God made me one of the instruments of bringing Fanny and you together, which union I have no doubt He had foreordained. Whatever He designs He will do for me yet. ‘Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord,’ is my text just now.”

To understand at all his superstition and his faith, his melancholy and his humor, we must know pretty thoroughly the circumstances in which he grew up. This is not the place to draw a picture of the solitary and elemental life of the prairies of the early part of the century, but it seems to be a general tendency for such primitive, large and lonely surroundings to breed in civilized man a pervading contemplative gloom. In our own west strange superstitions flourish, and Lincoln seems to have retained more of them than would be expected of so logical a mind. To the day of his death he believed in signs and dreams, in lucky and unlucky ways of doing things. It is such facts that make it such a baffling task to get imaginatively into his inner life. To make the picture clear you are tempted to leave out part of it. Two of his early friends have written books, coherent and interesting, showing the aspects in which he was like the other Westerners,—hearty, shrewd, humorous, slangy, superstitious, ambitious, but they do not show why he was great. Most of his biographers, on the other hand, have generalized and conventionalized him, bringing out his goodness and greatness at the sacrifice of his individuality. Caricature is easy and interesting; so is conventional idealization. Portrait painting is hard. There have been among the great painters very few who have been great portrait painters. Imagination and artistic skill are not often combined with that self-suppression and intellectual patience and catholicity necessary to represent, not only with brilliancy but with fidelity, the soul of another. The portrait painter ought to combine the imagination of the creative artist with the con-

Signs and dreams.

The convention-
alized Lincoln.

science of the man of science. The world has been working hard at Lincoln since his death, and all the discussion is good, for it will all help forward the final adequate expression, which, within human limitations, is likely some day to be given.

Comparisons.

Of one thing I feel sure: that no life in American history is more surely worth intimate acquaintance. There are, happily for us, a number great and good enough to repay all the time necessary to learn what is possible about them. Washington, purest, most serviceable, most unspotted of all; Jefferson, so faulty, but so fertile and so vital; Hamilton, brilliant, solid, gallant, and obstinate safeguard; Franklin, one of the great philosophic minds of the world; Marshall and Webster, clearing up the theories under which we live; and others, many of them, in varying degrees of importance. As Washington comes first, through his usefulness, his elevation, his varied, apt, and unfailing powers, so Lincoln is first among them in personal interest and individuality of character, and probably second in size when seen in the perspective of history. Washington's character is almost as simple as a good rule, and as rich as morality, when rightly appreciated; Lincoln's, contradictory, complex, more fallible, more colored, both grotesque and grand, undignified and noble, in its different way is equally inspiring. Containing less of the saint, his life teaches more the lessons of the pilgrim. His mental and moral struggles, with their victories and reverses, are an inspiring study, because, whatever the compromises or delays, the end is progress and victory.

*End of
Required Reading.*

[For a very full bibliography on Lincoln, see the C. L. S. C. required book for this year on "Abraham Lincoln." In addition to the works enumerated should be mentioned the recent volume on "Lincoln, The Man of the People," by Norman Hapgood (Macmillan), and the "Life of Abraham Lincoln," by Ida M. Tarbell, (2 vols., McClure Company).]

THE IDEAL.

Her touch is like the dew in spring,
Reviving, thrilling, quickening.

Her voice doth make one think upon
Some low seraphic antiphon.

Her smile hath all the ravishment
Of Orient wed to Occident.

And starward aspirations stir
The soul of him who worships her!

— Clinton Scollard.